from an essay,

**Hobbes, Rawls, Nussbaum, Buchanan,**

**and All Seven of the Virtues**

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  A case can be made that a flourishing human life must show seven virtues. Not eight. Not one. But seven.[[2]](#footnote-2) The case in favor of four of them, the “pagan” or “aristocratic” virtues of courage, justice, temperance, and prudence, was made by Plato and Aristotle and Cicero. In the early 13th century St. Albert the Great summarized Cicero’s claim that every virtuous act has all four: “For the knowledge required argues for prudence; the strength to act resolutely argues for courage; moderation argues for temperance; and correctness argues for justice.”[[3]](#footnote-3) The four persisted until the 18th century in Western reflections on the virtues, as for example in Adam Smith’s *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759/1790).

The pagan four are the political virtues, in many senses---for example, the ancient sense of contributing to the survival and flourishing of a *polis*, a small Greek city state. “A human,” said Aristotle, “is a political animal [*zoon politikon*].” A hoplite in the phalanx of the *polis* needed all four of them. So did a politician speaking to the Athenian assembly. When Athens ignored any of them---for example, justice in its treatment of Melos or prudence in its expedition to Syracuse---the results were not good. Vices undermined Athenian flourishing, as they will always do.[[4]](#footnote-4)

 The other three virtues for a flourishing life, adding up to the blessed seven, are faith, hope, and love. These three so-called “theological” virtues are not until the 19th century regarded as political. Before the Romantics and their nationalism and socialism they were thought of as achieving the salvation of an individual soul. “The theological virtues are above the nature of man,” wrote St. Albert’s student St. Thomas Aquinas around 1270, “the intellectual and moral virtues perfect the human intellect and appetite in proportion to human nature, but the theological virtues do so supernaturally.”[[5]](#footnote-5) The theological virtues could also be called “peasant,” to contrast them with the aristocratic four, or “Christian,” without implying that Christians have been especially skilled at achieving them. The case for them is made very early in the history of that great Jewish heresy. When in about 50 AD St. Paul in his first extant letter praises the three he appears to be drawing on a tradition already established among the emergent Christians (1 Thess. 1:3; 5:8). His most famous statement of it, adorning now many cards from Hallmark, is of course 1 Corinthians 13: “Faith, hope, and love, these three abide. But the greatest of these is love.”

 The theological virtues can be given entirely secular meanings. Faith is the virtue of identity and rootedness. It is backward looking: who *are* you? Hope is forward looking: who do you wish to become? Both sustain humans, and indeed can be viewed, with love of the transcendent, as the characteristically human virtues. A woman without faith is no person. She is as we say “hollow.” A man with no hope goes home and shoots himself. And in a world in which God has died a human without some love for the secular transcendent---science, art, the nation, cricket---is not flourishing.

The four pagan virtues and the three Christian make a strange marriage, consummated in the middle of the 13th century by Aquinas in his astonishingly comprehensive analysis of the virtues.[[6]](#footnote-6) The seven often contradict one another. No free, adult male citizen of Athens, for instance, regarded love as a primary virtue. It was nice to have, doubtless---see the *Symposium*---but in no sense “political,” and was devalued therefore in a world that took politics as the highest expression of human virtue. Aristotle admires most of all the virtue of *megalopsyche*, the great-souled-ness, translated literally into Latin as *magnanimitas*. Magnanimity is the virtue of an aristocrat, someone with the moral luck to be able to exercise it from above. By contrast the virtue of love, as Nietzsche said with a sneer, accompanies a slave religion. It is, he almost said, feminine.

When in the late 1930s Simone Weil, a French secular Jew on her way to Christianity, witnessed a religious procession one night in a Portuguese fishing village it struck her that “Christianity is pre-eminently the religion of slaves, that slaves cannot help belonging to it, and I among others.”[[7]](#footnote-7) Love—even in its social forms emphasized in the 19th century as an abstract solidarity—begins as pacific, Christian, and yielding, quite contrary to the macho virtues of a citizen of Athens or of Rome. Alasdair MacIntyre notes that “Aristotle would certainly not have admired Jesus Christ and he would have been horrified by St. Paul,” with all their embarrassing talk of love.[[8]](#footnote-8) The pagans were not lovelorn, at least not in their philosophies. The Christians were.

From about 400 BC to about 1749 AD the moral universe was described as mixtures of the Seven Principal Virtues, containing hundreds of minor and particular virtues. The tensions among the seven, and their complementarities, too, can be expressed in a diagram:

***The Seven Principal Virtues***

**The Sacred The Ethical Object:**

 **HOPE** **FAITH**

 Martin Luther King St. Peter

 **The Transcendent**

 **LOVE**

 Emma Goldman

 **Other People**

 **JUSTICE** [social balance]

Gandhi

 **COURAGE**

 Achilles, Shane

 **TEMPERANCE [**individual balance]

 Socrates, Jane Austen

 **The Self**

**The Profane, Quotidian**

 **PRUDENCE**

 (Max U, Practical Wisdom, Rationality)

 Ben Franklin

(The Ethical Subject:)

**Gender:** “masculine” 🡨———————————————🡪“feminine”

 autonomy🡨————————————————🡪 connection

 Freedom Solidarity

 *Gesellschaft Gemeinschaft*

Minor though admirable virtues such as thrift or honesty can be described as combinations of the principal seven. The seven are in this sense primary colors. They cannot be derived from each other, and the other, minor colors *can* be derived from them. Blue plus red makes purple, blue plus yellow makes green. But you can’t get red from maroon and purple. Honesty is justice plus temperance in matters of speech, with a dash of courage and a teaspoon of faithfulness. A vice is a notable lack of one or more of the virtues. Aquinas was the master of such analyses, and provides scores of them in showing that the seven are principal. "The cardinal virtues," he notes, "are called more principal, not because they are more perfect than all the other virtues, but because human life more principally turns on them and the other virtues are based on them."[[9]](#footnote-9) Courage plus prudence yields enterprise. Temperance plus justice yields humility. Temperance plus prudence yields thrift.

Various moderns have tried to make up a new color wheel, with “integrity” or “civility” or “sustainability” as primary. Thus a *New Yorker* cartoon in 2002: a man who looks like he’s just returned from a grilling by a Senate committee about Enron and other accounting disasters says to his little son, “Honesty is a fine quality, Max, but it isn’t the whole story.” Making up new primaries is like depending on purple and green, or chartreuse and aquamarine. These are good and important colors, among my favorites. But they are technically speaking “secondary,” or even “tertiary,” the palette of Gauguin and Matisse against that of late Van Gogh and late Piet Mondrian. In the ethical case the faux primaries are accompanied by no tradition of how to mix or array them.

The tensions and complementarities, I say, are embodied in the diagram. In ethical space the bottom is the realm of the profane, where prudence and temperance rule. The top is the realm of the sacred, of spiritual love and of faith and hope. Moving up is moving from self-disciplining virtues (prudence, temperance), whose main object is the self, through altruistic virtues, whose main object is others (love of humans; justice), and finally to the transcendent virtues (faith, hope, and love of a transcendent), whose main object are God or physics or the betterment of the poor. That is, bottom to top is the axis of wider and wider ethical objects.[[10]](#footnote-10)

Prudence and justice in the middle are calculative and intellectual. They have often been thought since Plato and the writers of footnotes to Plato to be the most characteristically human of virtues. They were glorified especially by the hard men of the 17th and 18th centuries in Europe fleeing from religious faith and hope and love. Immanuel Kant elevated a combination of prudence and justice which he called “pure reason” to the very definition of a human and a citizen.[[11]](#footnote-11)

By the grace of Darwin, however, we now see that calculative virtues are not particularly human. They can be found in the least human of beings, in ants justly sacrificing themselves for the queen, or dandelions prudently working through the cracks in the sidewalk. The terminology is of course figurative, a human attribution, not Nature’s own way of putting it. But that is what we are discussing here: human figures of speech, since Nature has no words. Natural history has taught us in the past three centuries, and especially since 1859, to realize that the lion is not actually “courageous,” ever, but merely prudent in avoiding elephants, with a bit of justice to acknowledge the hierarchy of the pride.

Courage and temperance are emotion-controlling and will-disciplining, and therefore, we now realize, more characteristically human than prudence and justice. And the most human virtues, I say, are those secularized theological virtues, faith, hope, and love, providing the transcendent ends for a human life. The rest---even courage and temperance---are means.

The triad of temperance-justice-prudence near the bottom and middle is cool and classical, and therefore recommended itself in the 18th century to early theorists of the bourgeoisie such as David Hume and Adam Smith. Hume called them the “artificial” virtues, following in substance Grotius and Pufendorf, because they are the virtues necessary for the artful making of any community whatever. The coolness of temperance, justice, and prudence was particularly beloved by men who had seen or had vividly imagined their communities collapsing in religious war and dynastic ambition, of Jesuit and Presbyter, of Habsburg and Bourbon and Stuart. The excesses of faith and hope and the transcendent parts of love severely spooked the men of the 18th century. Both Hume and Smith had witnessed from afar, for example, the Jacobite rising of 1745, with nothing like sympathy—Hume and Smith were not wild Highlanders or Jacobites, and certainly not Catholics, but lowland Scots of a deistic or atheistic bent, who had made their peace with Englishry.

The other, “natural” virtues of courage, love, hope, and faith impart warmth and meaning to an artfully made community. Sometimes too much warmth and meaning. The Scottish followers of Francis Hutcheson admitted love, as benevolence, and admitted courage, as enterprise, but rather off to the side of their main concerns. They certainly had no business with hope and faith--- Hume for instance being very fierce against their religious forms, “celibacy, fasting, and the other monkish virtues.” Imparting warmth and meaning was decidedly not what the Scots of the Enlightenment had in mind. That is a later and Romantic project, and these were not Romantics.

Left to right in the diagram exhibits the gendered character of the virtues, masculine and feminine in the conventional tales. Left-right expresses the gender of the ethical actor, or subject. Women of course are supposed conventionally to think of the world from the perspective of right-side love, or of its corresponding vices, such as envy and jealousy. Men are supposed to think of the world from the perspective of left-side courage, or its corresponding vices of cowardice, vainglory, self-absorption, and so forth. Another name for the right side in the diagram is “connection”; and for the left, “autonomy.” Frank Knight, who was more than an economist, believed that even ordinary human desires could be reduced “in astonishingly large measure to the desire to be like other people, and the desire to be different.”[[12]](#footnote-12) The theologian Paul Tillich called them “participation” and “individualization,” and noted that there is a “courage to be” but also a “courage to be as a part,” that is, to participate. Michael Ignatieff called the one side "connection and rootedness" and the other side "freedom": "a potential contradiction. . . arises between our need for social solidarity and our need for freedom." We have rights, which is a good thing, allowing us to achieve our left-side projects of hope and courage regulated by justice. But we need "love, respect, honor, dignity, solidarity with others," Ignatieff notes, on the other, upper-right-hand side, and these cannot be compelled by law.[[13]](#footnote-13) Hence Hume's odd vocabulary of the “natural” as against the “artificial,” law-enforced virtues.

The seven are, I claim, a roughly adequate philosophical psychology.[[14]](#footnote-14)  You can test their adequacy by imagining a person or a community that notably lacks one of them. A loveless life is terrible; a community without justice is, too. Yet any full description of the human virtues would do just as well, I am sure. Confucian thought, or Native American traditions, or African traditional law and custom, each have local versions of the Western Seven, too.

From a forthcoming book

Size Matters:

How Some Sciences Lost Interest in Magnitude, and What to Do About It

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*Small wonder that students have trouble [learning significance testing]. They may be trying to think.*

W. Edwards Deming 1975, p. 14x

*The rationale for the 5% "accept-reject syndrome" which afflicts econometrics and other areas requires immediate attention*.

Arnold Zellner 1984, p. 277

*The earth is round* *(p<.05)*.

Jacob Cohen 1994, p. 997

**Executive Summary, by Way of Preface**

Let's agree at the outset with every language except recent English to call anything a "science" that looks into the facts of the world in a systematic way. Chemical science looks into the chemical facts of the world, historical science into the historical facts of the world, economic science into the economic facts of the world.

So-called "statistical significance" is one of the main tools of some of the sciences so defined -- medicine, economics, psychology, sociology, some parts of the life and earth sciences, and parts of history. It is not used in the other sciences -- physics, astronomy, geophysics, chemistry, and the other parts of the life, earth, and historical sciences.

Every science uses statistics, and should. Counting is central to a real science. A big scientific question is, "How Much?" Answering the How-Much scientific question will often involve statistical methods. If your historical problem can best be answered with cross tabulations, you had better not be terrified of them. If your physical problem leads naturally to the Poisson distribution, you had better be fluent in that bit of statistical theory. If you want to say how much incarceration affects crime rates "other things equal," you had better know how to run multiple regressions that will isolate the effect of incarceration from those "other things." Fine.

The technique we are worrying about in this book, "statistical significance," is a subset of statistical methods. You can spot it in the sciences that use it by noting the presence of an *R* or *t* or *F* or *p,* an asterisk on a result or a parenthetical number under the result,usually with the word "significance" in attendance. "Statistical significance" is a subset of "testing."

Testing, again, is used by all the sciences, and of course should be. Assertions should be confronted with that "world" we mentioned, or else the study is a mere philosophical or mathematical exercise. The problem we are highlighting is that the so-called "test" of "statistical significance" does not answer the *quantitative, scientific* question. It is not really a *scientific* test. It is a philosophical test. It does not ask, How Much? It asks Whether. Sciences depend on magnitude, not on existence. Existence is studied in the Departments of Philosophy or Mathematics. Magnitude is studied in the Departments of Physics, Economics, Engineering, History, Medicine. In some of the sciences, such as our home field of economics, the existence question has substituted for the magnitude question.

The substitution is a mistake. That is the only point of our book. Any quantitative science answer How Much, or should. Some of them, like geophysics and chemistry, do. But medicine, economics, and the others have stopped asking How Much. As electronic computation has cheapened and cheapened, at a Moore's Law rate, the sciences of medicine, economics, and the others have become worse. Though festooned with difficult-looking mathematics and portentous-looking numbers, they have become sizeless.

"Statistical significance" substitutes another and mostly irrelevant question for the scientific question. Instead of asking How Much it asks a very peculiar substitute question: Is the number more than two or three standard deviations away from zero, supposing it was the outcome of a proper random sample? For the relevant scientific question -- How much oomph does this variable have? -- the technique substitutes an irrelevant question about "precision-at-an-arbitrary-level-given-a-sampling-problem" -- which is supposed to tell whether an effect "exists." The substitution has been spreading since Sir Ronald A. Fisher (1890-1962), by the force of an unprincipled will, made it canonical, in the 1920s. It had existed before, back to Laplace and earlier. But after Fisher it became dominant in agronomy and genetics and economics and then in many other fields. In the sciences we are worrying about here an irrelevant "test of statistical significance" has come to replace a real test of substantive significance. A false measure of precision has replaced a real measure of oomph.

The answer to the irrelevant, "statistical-significance" question often has its own difficulties, on which a good deal of mathematical ingenuity has been spent. Is the sample proper? It the assumed sampling distribution the correct one? And so forth. You can find many thousands of mathematical papers published each year in the journals of statistics on these interesting matters.

But here we are concerned with the simpler and prior difficulty: that the question about size -- How Much? -- has fallen away. The economists and medical researchers consult the precision of their results, modulo random sampling, and neglect to examine the size. In the sizeless sciences, the ones that since the 1920s have followed Fisher's Rule, the science has been lost. None of the results of significance-testing are correct, unless by accident. You yourself are being given dangerous medicine, for example, because of "significance" testing. The economic policy of your community is mistaken. The social policies lead to more crime, the biology is wrong, the psychology misleading. The sizeless scientists have stopped doing science. Each year it gets worse, we say, and recently it has become worse at an increasing rate.

We want to persuade you as a sizeless scientist, if you are one, to get back to asking How Much. We want you to stop using Fisher's Rule and start having a scientific life.

We want you other people to be protected against the nonsense of statistical significance. A voter needs to know what is meant when a public opinion poll wrongly claims a "plus or minus 2 percentage point error." A businessperson needs to know what her marketing director is saying when he wrongly asserts that price cuts are a "significant" factor in sales. A lawyer needs to know that the assertion of "significance" in the impact of secondhand smoke is meaningless.

And we want you to understand how this scientific catastrophe happened. The history is interesting in itself, a case in the social study of science. We've discovered, for example, that William Sealy Gosset, the chemist at Guinness brewery in Dublin who invented The Test in 1904, never believed it was a substitute for finding out How Much, and said so in correspondence with Fisher and Egon Pearson in the 1920s. Gosset was not a very forceful man, and lost out to the unpleasant and unprincipled but veryforceful R. A. Fisher.

Unless you understand the history you are going to go on thinking, as you do, that there must be *some* argument for significance testing. You will suspect that it is *not* a mistake. Surely all these brilliant people in the history of statistics got it right? Surely Ziliak and McCloskey and the tiny tribe of critics of the technique since the 1880s have got it wrong? Someone back in the early 20th century, you will think, must have been wise to set eugenics and agronomy off on careers of significance testing. But when you see how Fisher and his immediate followers achieved their unhappy victory, we think you will change your mind.

We want you to realize how widespread the mistake has become. As we said, many sciences with statistical problems have not made the mistake -- physics, for example. But in economics, where we first realized what was going on, it has become a plague, stopping empirical progress cold. Nothing inferred from statistical significance in economics for the past few decades is to be believed. The numbers may be right or they may be wrong, but their statistical significance -- a test judged decisive by most of the economists estimating them -- is no evidence one way or the other. All the work has to be done over again.

But economics is by no means the only field so ruined. To our horror, we discovered that the situation in medicine is worse -- despite the cries of anguish from some medical researchers and some of their statistical advisors. People are dying today because of R. A. Fisher's type II error. We map out in the book the boundaries of the Sizeless Sciences against the Oomph Sciences. The lonely critics in population biology, say, or in educational testing should come to realize that they are not alone. Perhaps together we can turn our fields back to scientific work.

Since the beginning of modern statistics there have been statistical thinkers who want science to measure up. Our hope is that the Sizeless Sciences can, if they will drop statistical "significance," will become again Sciences of Oomph.

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##### From Deirdre McCloskey’s handouts to students in her classes:

##### Rules of This House

In series use a comma before the “and”: X, Y**,** and Z. The trouble is that without it the reader finds it easy to think you mean “X and another thing combining Y and Z.”

Two spaces after a period, one after a comma. Repeat after me: Two spaces after . . . .

Get the word “stated” out of your active vocabularies. “The book stated” is a childish way of saying “Coffin et al. claim.”

Don’t use “they” as singular to avoid a choice of “he” or “she”; often enough you are not even in *that* bind: “In order for a business to prosper they need to find a market” should of course be “it”: “In order for a business to prosper it needs to find a market.” When you do have a he/she problem pick one and go with it.

Relative pronoun (“that”) **for people is “who” or “whom.”** “If one is known to someone who [not “that”] works for the FBI . . . .”

No comma is needed after an initial phrase such as “Considering the options **[no comma here, despite what your teacher in 8th grade told you!!]** the B choice is best.” Or “In summary, the Enlighenment blah, blah.” Sometimes—rarely—the comma will be useful if otherwise the sentence would be confusing. But this will almost never be the case if the next phrase starts with “the” or “this.” (See the example at the end of the next item.)

Get “I believe” and “I think” out of your writing. Putting yourself into the writing—using “I”—is fine *if your opinion is the point*. When it’s not, keep yourself out of the picture. As Strunk and White say, “To deliver unsolicited opinions is to suggest that the demand for them is brisk.” To put it another way, you are being asked for FACTS and ARGUMENTS, put into a good STYLE, not opinions.

Citations in the author/page style are fine, but do the punctuation correctly. The period goes *outside* the citation: “is ten to one (Jacobsen, 282).” Not: “is ten to one. Jacobsen, 282” with no period at all after the parentheses.

**Always staple papers.** Little carelessnesses like turning in two sheets with the corners folded, 4th-grade style, get your reader off to a bad start. Imagine that reader as your boss. She’ll fire you, believe me.

**Top Ten Signs That Some People**

**Are Not Paying Attention**

**to Aunt Deirdre’s Good Advice on**

**Developing a Grownup Writing Style**

10.) Using “the fact that” or “due to”

9.) Using “the former” or “the latter”

8.) Using “this” or “these” too much when “the” or “such a” would do

7.) Not spellchecking

6.) Not double spacing

5.) “Not getting the citation punctuation right” (p. 358).

4.) Not inserting that second comma in A, B, and C

3.) Still thinking that a semicolon is the same as a colon

2.) Still, using, too, many, commas,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,

**AND THE TOP SIGN THAT etc., etc.:**

1.) STILL NOT USING TWO SPACES AFTER A FINAL STOP (period, exclamation point, question mark)

**Add This to Your Handouts on Style, and *Follow It*!!!**

* “Buzz, buzz” (Diamond, p. 30). Note where the period goes: AFTER the citation.
* No need for elipses before and after a quotation: “ . . . buzz, buzz . . .” (Diamond 30) is wrong.
* A, B, and C. X, Y, or X. **Note the comma before “and.”** (And note where I put the period in that last sentence: Inside the quote marks—odd though it seems, that’s the printing convention.
* No title pages. No padding.
* No “In my opinion” (computer folks say, “IMHO”). The women especially need to watch this. It’s a good and sensible thing to do in conversation, this self-deprecation. It’s fatal to an argument in prose.

 If we circle something there’s something wrong with it—bad choice of word, or using a word contrary to the Holy Writ of *Economical Writing*.

##### **Further Top Ten Signs That Someone Is Not Reading**

##### **That Brilliant Book**

##### **Deirdre McCloskey, *Economical Writing***

1.) Using a comma after an introductory clause

2.) “this . . . . this . . . . this”

3.) Starting sentences with “However,”

4.) Using the word “process”

5.) Using “Not only . . . but also.”

6.) Not grasping the difference between a colon (:) and a semi-colon (;)

7.) Not reading out loud: silliness, rhymes, etc.

8.) No marks on the paper: no last proofreading

9.) Not using two spaces after a period or ! or ?

10.) Right justification

**How to write an e-mail.**

E-mail is still developing its forms. I want you to succeed, which starts by not annoying people when you send them e-mails. It’s not undemocratic to treat people courteously. The most courteous format, the one that treats the person you are e-mailing to with the correct degree of respect, is that of the traditional, written letter, in this order:

[**date and return address** is supplied automatically, so you don’t normally need it in an e-mail, *unless you are asking for ordinary mail contact*. You’d be surprised how many times people ask for things to be sent by mail yet give no place to send them to.]

**Mailing address of the person,** if you are imitating the letter form more exactly—e.g. for a job application. Giving the address adds more formality.

**Dear Title and Last Name of Person** [e.g. Dear Professor McCloskey**. No “Hi Professor McCloskey”** or any variants you might think up; stick with the regular forms, which in English have pretty much reduced to “Dear.” We’ve lost the older forms of address to senators and kings, Your Excellency and that sort of things. Obviously with a close friend none of this matters, but you don’t need advice on how to deal with close friends: I want you to succeed with strangers]: {little detail: if it is a formal letter *use a colon*—that’s “McCloskey**:**” --- but if it’s a letter to a friend, or meant to be a non-business letter use a comma---“Deirdre**,**” So the rule is, *if you’re using someone’s last name you must not be a close friend*, so in that case use the colon. By the way, *at good universities professors are embarrassed to be called “Dr.”* (you can tell a weak professor by his insistence on being called “Dr.”); but they do like to be called “Professor.” In my case, “Most Distinguished Professoressa,” if you please [🡸 joke, joke: it’s the Italian feminine].

**Introduce yourself in one short sentence** if necessary, *but only if necessary*, and anyway in a fashion relevant to what you are doing: “I am applying for the position advertised in your department of marketing” or “I am a student in your [name of course].” Never, never say (in an e-mail or any other time), “You don’t remember me, but.” You should act in a self-respecting fashion.

[**Do not apologize for “disturbing” the person, or “taking up his time,” or say “I know you’re busy, but.”** If you’re writing to the person it must be someone who should be “disturbed.” Otherwise you shouldn’t write at all, correct? So there’s no need to apologize. Professors, for example, are paid to answer reasonable questions posed by students.]

**State your question or other business**. *You need not be desperately brief if the matter is complex*, but of course brevity is good. Normally there should be some *point* to e-mailing the person: you should end by asking her to *do* some particular thing, for example (submitting a grade, recommending you for a job, granting you an interview for a job, etc.). Tell her what to do, politely. But don’t grovel. It’s wise to keep a somewhat formal tone in a letter to a stranger. Use rather elevated diction [🡨 I’m doing it right now: instead of, “Talk a little bit fancy”]. It is also wise to keep your temper—though sometimes a letter is *meant* to injure or outrage.

In a formal business letter (one that used the colon, remember!) always **end with**

**Sincerely,**

**Your Full Name**

That will do fine for any business situation (other formal “closings” as they are called—such as “Yours truly,”--- have fallen out of fashion). For a close friend you of course can do anything: “See you around, you jerk,” [but always add that comma before a new line and your name]. But for less than close friends you can choose among “Yours,” [close friends, even lovers], “Regards” [someone you’ve met and have a reasonably warm relationship with], “With warm regards” (a warm acquaintance, not a close friend), “Love” (*women only* are allowed to use this to someone other than a very close friend or relative; men use “Warm regards” in the same situation).

**Once Again, Class!!!**

Any paper without two spaces after a full stop 🡺 one grade off! [We'll start applying this later in the term]

A check mark, you know, means “Hmm. Good point!”

Note “this”/”those”/”these” and if there seem to be too many, knock ‘em out! Use “the,” or sometimes “such.”

Avoid clichés, that is, set phrases you are accustomed to hearing: they give an impression of not thinking. “Jack up the prices” (not economics anyway).

That introductory comma is *not* necessary, whatever Ms. Jones said. Put in commas *by ear*. And always: “A, B, and C.”

Pay attention to my tips on The Right Word: if I’ve suggested another, it’s because you’ve misused the word; learn not to by paying attention.

People take “who,” not “that” or “which”: “The people *who* we saw,” not “The people *that* we saw.”

No “due to” and other Bad Phrases (see the book).

“Note the order of punctuation in quotations.” (I’ve been watching it recently in books and newspapers, by the way, and notice that printers sometimes get it wrong.)

Get yourself and your opinions out of the pieces. Your boss wants to know what you think, but not hedged around with “I think.” When you are talking about “I” you aren’t talking about the subject, are you?

Always indent the first line of paragraphs (if you’ve learned to write abroad you might not know this).

Learn the different between : and ; It's this: when B *follows from or illustrates* A, then use a colon (:), as I just did; when B' is *parallel* *or similar to* B, use a semicolon (;), as I just did.

Don’t repeat. Ask yourself: Am I just filling in here?

What do you put at the end of a question, always? How do you know that the sentence is a question? Does tone of voice tell you? Are you getting tired of my little joke?

Note spellings: “elsewhere,” not “else where.” “Don’t” not “Don’ t” [extra space]

Don’t start sentences with [. . . . . : you fill it in!]

DO START SENTENCES WITH “And” or “But”

“Due to the fact that” is an idiotic and unlovely phrase. Or “Because of the fact that.” Please. Ditto, “not only . . . but also.” “As well as” (usually).

You don’t need to keep reminding us that you are talking about, say, the textbook, or the 19th century.

Don’t be afraid of being funny, if you can pull it off. Let’s see some *Saturday Night Live* humor.

NEVER “and/or” or “he/she”

Cliché: “right place at the right time”

“Like in” 🡺 “As in.”

Things, such as the economy, “going up” are not economic ways of talking.

Avoid the Dread Comma Splice, it is the fault of merely adding on a sentence connected with a comma, you can see here what the problem is, it is hard to read, some great writers do it, by the way.

If you read what you’ve written out loud you will correct many infelicities [ = unhappy turns of phrase].

**To test whether you are getting these points, try:**

Quiz on *Economical Writing*

1.) “The President went to see the Chinese premier, so that the Chief Executive could discuss the Korean situation with the Chinese leader.” What’s wrong? *Name it*.

2.) Correct the following*:* <  *Landes thinks “Europe is neat”. (Landes, p. 467)* >

3.) What mistake do both these sentences make? Mark it.

During the 19th century, the United Kingdom included Great Britain and Ireland.

Unfortunately, Landes is Eurocentric.

4.) How about this one: “England, Scotland and little Wales make up the island of `Great Britain’.”

5.) This paragraph has a problem. This author doesn’t even notice that she has this problem. This problem is the pointless overuse of a certain word. This word is being used essentially as a substitute for “the”—which we already have in English. Circle this problem word in this paragraph.

6.) “Not only is using the phrase `due to’ unnecessarily fancy, but it also is a sign of childish writing.” Comment?

 7.) The writer of this brief paragraph does not understand a tiny little convention in typing. Missing it makes her prose hard to read. The ends of sentences are not clear, and the prose therefore blurs. What is her mistake? Did she just make it also in the previous sentence? *When will she learn?!*

8.) The process of the process of writing is a difficult process. This process of rewriting is important in the process. The key to this process is to eliminate needless words. What word does Professor McCloskey have in mind in this process? *Rewrite the paragraph making the necessary correction:*

A few citations to work of mine to back up these little readings:

**Ethics:**

***The Bourgeois Virtues: Ethics for an Age of Commerce.*** University of Chicago Press, June 2006, in press as a trade book, volume 1 of 4, and a précis version on the subject, under contract to the Press.

The story is of the rise of a prudential rhetoric in the Netherlands and England in the 17th century, its triumph in the Scottish Enlightenment and American colonial thought in the 18th century, and its decline after 1848 from, as Shaw once called it, the Great Conversion. An ethics of the virtues, as old as Aristotle and as new as feminist ethics, provides a way out of the growing self-hatred of the bourgeoisie. “Bourgeois virtue” is not a contradiction in terms. Economists are recognizing that virtue underlies a market economy; economic historians have long understood so in the lives of Quakers and the vital few. What the social sciences have not recognized since the 18th century and its notion of *doux commerce* is that a market economy can underlie the virtues. Not all virtues. Some virtues--in fact the ones we celebrate in philosophy and myth--are pagan or Christian, aristocratic and plebeian. We need new philosophies and myths, new readings of the ancient virtues, to suit a world in which we are all now bourgeois.

***How to Be Human\* \*Though an Economist***. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000. (*Advice to graduate students and young academics.*)

**Statistical significance:**

[see also chapters in *The Rhetoric of Economics* (Chps 8 and 9 in the 2nd ed, 1998), Chp. 2 in *The Vices of Economists; The Virtues of the Bourgeoisie* 1996, pp. 187-208 in *How to Be Human\* \*Though an Economist* 2000 (items marked **#** just below), *The Secret Sins of Economics* 2002, and

Stephen Ziliak and Deirdre McCloskey, ***Size Matters*: *How Some Sciences Lost an Interest in Magnitude, and What to Do About It,***under review, University of Michigan Press as of May, 2006

McCloskey and Ziliak, “The Standard Error of Regression.” *Journal of Econ omic Literature*, March 1996

[???] [with Stephen Ziliak] “Size Matters: The Standard Error of Regressions in the *American Economic Review* during the 1990s.” *Journal of Socio-Economics* 33: 527-546. It was the subject of a symposium, pp. 547-664 with comments by Arnold Zellner, Clive Granger, Edward Leamer, Joel Horowitz, Erik Thorbecke, Gerd Gigerenzer, Bruce Thompson, Morris Altman, and others (from a presentation at the American Economic Association annual convention, January 2004, Kenneth Arrow presiding).

**How to write as an academic**

[6]*Economical Writing*, Prospect Heights, Ill.: Waveland Press, 1999. Inexpensive paperback

And *How to be Human*, above.

**And a wonderful book (*almost* as good as *Economical Writing!*) by colleagues of mine at the University of Illinois, just out:**

Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein, *They Say, I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*. New York: Norton, 2006. Inexpensive paperback.

1. Parts of the present essay were delivered as a comment on Martha Nussbaum’s *Frontiers of Justice* (2006) at the Institute for Social Studies at the Hague, March 10, 2006; and the whole as the first Buchanan Lecture, George Mason University, April 7, 2006. I thank the participants and the organizers, and especially Martha Nussbaum and James Buchanan, for their comments. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Or so at any rate I argue at length in *The Bourgeois Virtues: Ethics for an Age of Commerce* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Quoted in Houser, "Virtue of Courage," 2002, p. 306. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. James Boyd White, *When Words Lose Their Meaning* CITE [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Aquinas, *Summa* *Theologiae*, c. 1269-1272, Ia IIae., q. 62, art. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Aquinas’ so-called “Treatise on the Virtues” (he did not call it this) is part of *Summa Theologiae,* c. 1270 [1984], First Half of the Second Part, questions 49-67], trans. and ed. John A. Oesterle. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press. Also, separately, . c. 1269-1272 [1999]. *Disputed Questions on Virtue* [*Quaestio disputata de vertibus in commune* and *Quaestio*. . . *cardinalibus*]. Translation and preface Ralph McInerny. South Bend, Indiana: St. Augustine’s Press. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Quoted in Cole, *Simone Weil,* 2001, p. 116. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 172. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Aquinas, *Disputed Questions* (1267-72), Art. 1, p. 112 (“The Cardinal Virtues”). By “cardinal” Aquinas meant the four pagan virtues, but he extends the analysis to the theological virtues, too. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* c. 1270*,* Iae-Ia Q. 96, art. 3; and Q. 54 art. 2, to which he refers, quoted in Lisska, *Aquinas’ Theory of Natural Law,* 1996, p. 285. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Kant is not quite so easily summarized. Pure reason is also the character of setting ones own goals in life, which amounts to a secular version of faith, hope, and love. So Kant gets the transcendent in. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Knight 1922, in Knight 1935, p. 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Ignatieff, *Needs of Strangers,* 1984, pp. 17, 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Again I recommend *The Bourgeois Virtues: Ethics for an Age of Commerce*, and in particular Part 5, Systematizing the Seven Virtues, pp. 303-404. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)